

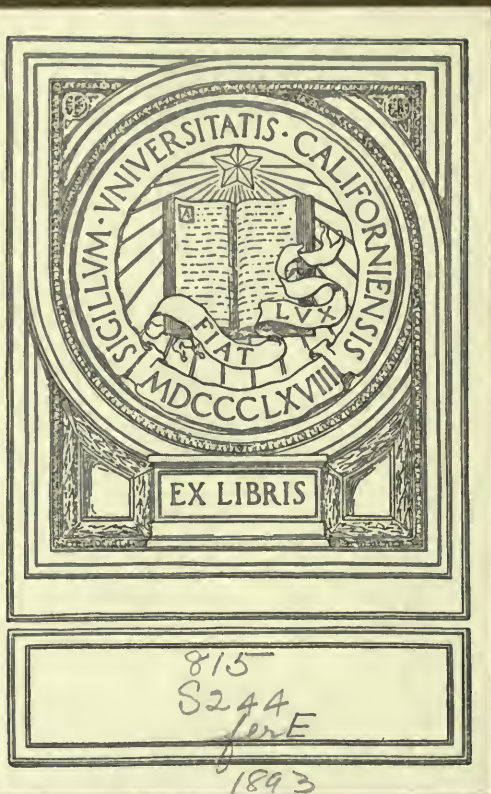
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American Tour, 1893,

OF

ELEONORA DUSE,

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF

Messrs. CARL AND THEODOR ROSENFELD.



❁ FERNANDE ❁

By VICTORIEN SARDOU.

THE ONLY CORRECT AND AUTHENTIC SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY; TAKEN FROM THE
PROMPT BOOK OF SIGNORA ELEONORA DUSE; TOGETHER WITH A
SKETCH OF HER LIFE, BY ANTONIO BRACCO.



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FERNANDE :

DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS, BY VICTORIEN SARDOU.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

- THE MARQUIS ANDRÉ D'ARCIS is a genuine Parisian *viveur*, whose fine character is shown by his marriage with Fernande Senechal, but still more by the magnanimity with which he pardons a false step of her past life. As a bachelor he led the loose life of men of his caste, but after his marriage he becomes a model husband.
- CLOTILDE, a young widow, who loves the Marquis, becomes aware that he is enamored of another one she sheltered in her house and whose life has not been without blemish. After having artfully wrung the confession from the Marquis that he loves her no longer, she concocts her plan of revenge—a plan unworthy of her character and explicable only as the result of jealousy.
- POMEROL, the lawyer, once a lively bachelor, but now a good husband, sympathetic and kind hearted, is the “*deus ex machina*,” who appears at the right moment and averts disaster.
- GEORGETTE, his jealous little wife, who hunts for proofs of her husband's disloyalty, but is otherwise harmless and devoted.
- MADAME DE BRIONNE, } Unimportant persons whom we meet in the salons
THE BARON, } of the Marquis.
THE BARONESS. }
- MADAME DE SENECHAL, the widow of a merchant who has died leaving his affairs in a complicated state, comes to Paris, gets into bad company and finally opens a gambling salon. She is a weak woman, who would like to change her evil way of living, but who is always dissuaded by the people who gather at her house.
- DE CIVRY, a young nobleman. Introduced into the house of Madame Senechal by a man who has forced his attentions upon him, he meets Pomerol in her ante-room and warned by him, is energetic enough to tear himself away.
- FERNANDE, daughter of Madame Senechal's. This young girl grows up amid the most demoralizing surroundings, yet remains unsullied until one of the scoundrels, profiting by her mother's imprisonment, induces her to sacrifice her virtue as the prize for her mother's liberation. She makes an unsuccessful attempt on her life.
- BARCASSIN, whom we meet in the salons of Madame Senechal, is a sculptor who has for years designed to model a statue of Ariadne, but has as yet not even so much as touched the clay.
- AMANDA, ASTER, GIBRALTAR and THERESE, *cocottes*.
- THE “COMMANDER,” DON RAMIRE, an adventurer and swindler.
- THE WORTHY “MAMA. SANTA CRUZ,” one of the ensemble at the salon of Madame Senechal. Her specialty is the harmless sport of pocketing all the sugar that is offered to her.
- FREDERIC is the servant who is “posted” on everything and who has to sound the alarm in case of a police visitation.
- ROQUEVILLE is the knave who has made himself the tyrant of Madame Senechal and her daughter through “his good connections.” He causes the mother to be imprisoned in order to force the daughter to yield to his solicitations as the prize of her mother's liberation.

ARGUMENT.

The Marquis André d'Arcis loves Clotilde, a young widow. She passionately reciprocates this feeling in the assurance that his whole heart is hers, nor does she in the least attempt to conceal her intimacy with him, although her good name suffers through it. After the lapse of some years the Marquis' ardor gradually cools. André regards his relations to the young and accomplished widow in the light of his many other liaisons, and gradually becomes tired of even pretending to love her. By chance he one evening attends a performance in the suburban theatre of Montmartre. His attention is attracted by a girl in one of the boxes, by whose beauty and childlike innocence and grace he is carried away. He vainly attempts to make her acquaintance. She disappears immediately after the performance. A few days later, after having vainly searched all Paris for her, he meets her on the street, yet she again eludes him by entering a store and leaving by a different exit. The Marquis now redoubles his efforts, and in order to be unmolested, he tells Clotilde that business calls him to Blois for some days. By arranging with a friend in Blois to dispatch letters for him to her at regular intervals he makes Clotilde believe that he is sojourning in Blois while he is really hunting for his unknown beauty in the streets of Paris. An anonymous letter informs Clotilde of the Marquis' actions. In order to convince herself she resolves to go to the theatre Montmartre, where he is said to pass his evenings. On her way to the theatre an accident happens, her carriage nearly running over a young girl. Fortunately she is pulled out from under the wheels before any harm is done, and Clotilde, who pities the beautiful and innocent-looking girl, takes her into her carriage. Her interest still increases when she

learns that the young girl has sought to take her life and had thrown herself under the wheels. The young would-be suicide is Fernandé, the only daughter of Madame Senechal, the widow of a Bordeaux merchant, who had been ruined by unlucky speculations, had shot himself in consequence, and had left his wife and daughter in the most straightened circumstances. Under an assumed name Mad. Senechal came to Paris and strove in every possible way to gain a living. Forced by the stress of circumstances she sank lower and lower until she welcomed at her house every evening a miscellaneous company, ostensibly for table d'hôte, but in reality for gambling purposes. Her house soon became a dangerous gambling hell, and through the presence of fallen women also a house of ill-fame. Once already they have been surprised by the police, who imprisoned Mad. Senechal. She is liberated through the agency of one of her guests, Roqueville, (an arch knave, who has gained an ascendancy over her by threatening to expose her to the police), but she has to pay a terrible price for it—Fernandé's virtue; and it is Fernandé who has sought to throw herself under the wheels of Clotilde's carriage.

In the salons of Mad. Senechal we meet the lawyer Philippe de Pomerol. This man, who formerly was a viveur and gambler, has since become a model husband, and it is only in the fulfillment of a promise that we find him for once in his old haunts. He has vowed to Fernandé that he would deliver her from her vicious surroundings, and has now come to redeem his promise. Here he meets his cousin Clotilde who has taken Fernandé home after her attempted suicide, and who has now come to see if she can be of assistance to the poor girl. Pomerol explains to Clotilde where she is, and she promises her aid in his undertaking.

After Mad. Senechal's liberation Pomerol takes her as well as her daughter to Clotilde, who assigns to them apartments in her house.

Clotilde's unrequited love for André causes her great sorrow. By pretending indifference she succeeds in making him confess that his affection for her has waned, and that he loves

another. To her great chagrin she learns that Fernande, whom he has just discovered through a window sitting at the piano, is the object of his affection. Clotilde, chafing inwardly at these disclosures, but disguising her real sentiments, introduces Fernande to the Marquis, who, she says, has just arrived from the province, and asks them both to dine with her.

Their marriage is Clotilde's aim. She leaves the Marquis in the dark in regard to Fernande's past life, while she makes Fernande believe that André knows everything. Thus she intends to wreak vengeance upon him. The wedding day approaches. Fernande, who is troubled with serious misgivings, shortly before the marriage ceremony writes a letter to the Marquis in which she acquaints him with the unfortunate episode of her life. André in his happy mood omits reading the letter, and the clever Clotilde succeeds in making him give it to her. Fernande now goes to the altar happy in the assurance that André knows everything and still has not withdrawn his love from her. Pomerol, who on that very day has returned from a long journey and learns of the wedding about to be celebrated, and not knowing who the bride is, invites Clotilde to go with him to the ceremony. She delays until the ceremony is over, and then triumphantly tells Pomerol that she intends to revenge herself on André by giving him Fernande's letter and thus rendering him unhappy forever. Pomerol takes the letter from her and locks her up in a room until the young couple have departed on their wedding tour. After their return they lead a happy life, as they love each other tenderly. Pomerol does everything to prevent Clotilde from executing her revengeful plans—all in vain. She watches her chance and succeeds in disclosing the secret to André. As he is going to give her the lie Fernande's demeanor conveys the terrible assurance that Clotilde has spoken the truth. Overwhelmed with grief he indignantly bids Fernande to leave the house. As she is about to obey Pomerol appears, gives her letter to the Marquis, who by its contents is convinced of his wife's worth and innocence, and again takes her to his bosom.

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I.

The FIRST SCENE is enacted in the salon of Madame Senechal. There we first meet the lawyer Pomerol, who has come to make good the promise he gave to Fernande, and has explained to him by Frederic what has taken place during his absence.

The SECOND SCENE introduces Barcassin and Amanda, guests of the salon, and Barcassin entertains his interlocutrix with the history of his statue of Ariadne.

In the THIRD SCENE we make the acquaintance of Aster, a low creature, who also regularly attends these sittings, and who regales the company with her adventures in Baden-Baden.

In the FOURTH and FIFTH SCENE we are brought in contact with several other representatives of these "salons," namely Gibraltar and Don Ramire, the Commander. This adventurer and swaggerer enters the salon for the first time, introduced by Gibraltar as a rich Egyptian, while Gibraltar relates how she fleeced him—Don Ramire lying about his wealth. In him we recognize immediately the dangerous swindler and knave.

The SEVENTH SCENE adds another couple of prison candidates to the company, Maresquier and Madame Santa Cruz. Frederic brings the news of an accident to Fernande, who has just been brought home in the carriage of an unknown lady, and the company goes to dinner without waiting for Madame Senechal.

In the NEXT SCENE appears Mr. Civry, the young nobleman on whom Anatole has forced his attention and invited to

the salon. Pomerol warns the young man from entering the dining hall by relating to him the history of his life, and Civry has enough energy to turn back.

Just as Pomerol in the NINTH SCENE says: "The only good that can come from a fault one has committed is to warn others from falling into the same error," Roqueville appears, the tyrant of the house, to whose question Pomerol coolly replies he has induced the young man to leave.

In the NEXT SCENE Frederic appears and announces a lady "who is apparently too decent to be admitted without ceremony." At the instigation of Pomerol who thinks the lady dissembles, she is admitted by Frederic, and Pomerol recognizes her as his cousin Clotilde. It was Clotilde's team that had nearly run over Fernande, and she has come to inquire about her welfare. Pomerol explains to her the nature of her surroundings, and they agree to jointly rescue the girl. Clotilde also informs Pomerol that the mishap was not accidental. "Oh, madame, I did not drive over the young lady, but she threw herself under the wheels," her coachman had told her. Pomerol then tells his cousin the whole history of Fernande's sufferings. Clotilde informs him that on the strength of an anonymous letter she is on her way to the Montmartre Theatre to surprise Marquis André, her faithless lover. Pomerol reproaches Clotilde for paying attention to this letter, and tells her what kind of company there is in the adjoining salon. Clotilde, impelled by curiosity, would like to pass some hours in this company, and prevails on Pomerol to permit her to enter for an hour, as she otherwise refuses to act for Fernande.

In the NEXT SCENE Mad. Senechal appears and hears from Clotilde the news of her daughter's accident. She relates to Clotilde in what straits she was placed after the suicide of her husband, and that she finally found herself under the necessity of opening her house to such disreputable company.

Clotilde, moved to pity and intending to help Mad. Senechal, begs her to come and live with her, which offer Mad. Senechal accepts with effusive thanks.

In the NEXT SCENE the diners enter the salon, and we have a vivid picture of the frivolous doings and conversation of such gatherings.

After Roqueville has given Frederic the order, "See that the alarm bell works and be on the lookout," the gambling begins in an adjoining room. While the company sit down to the game, Clotilde, who has been regarded with curiosity by the members of the demi-monde, inquires of Pomerol about the singular customs of the gamblers, who explains them to her.

Pomerol and Clotilde now succeed in engaging Fernande in a conversation. She promises Pomerol to make no further attempt at suicide, and Clotilde invites her to come to her house next day.

From the adjoining room Roqueville's voice is heard: "The police!" intermingled with the cry of "Leave the money where it is!" and such like. After the roulette has been removed Frederic enters and says: "Oh, it's nothing—a dog barked in the neighborhood and our dogs howled to keep him company."

After this reassuring piece of information the game is continued.

Roqueville, who has grown suspicious of the long conversation between Pomerol, Clotilde and Fernande, asks the latter what the conference is about and attempts to lead her into an adjoining room. Pomerol flies at the rascal, and Mad. Senechal requests every one to leave her house; if not she will call the police.

Amid cries of "The Commander has pocketed my money," and the threats of Roqueville they all depart, Pomerol and Clotilde following them.

ACT II.

We are in the comfortably furnished salon of Clotilde, whom we find in conversation with Georgette, Pomerol's wife. The latter, who is very jealous, has come to her experienced friend to tell her of her woes, and also relates what droll adventures her jealousy which, after all, turned out to be groundless, has led to. Clotilde reassures her as to her husband's loyalty, and Georgette in her turn tells what she has heard in the salon of Mons. de Brionne—sneering remarks about the marriage of Clotilde and the Marquis André.

In the SECOND SCENE we find Mad. de Brionne herself, who arouses Clotilde's jealousy by telling her that the Marquis is not in Blois, as he has made her suppose, but in Paris.

In the NEXT SCENE Clotilde and Georgette quarrel with Mad. de Brionne. Their conversation is interrupted by Pomerol. Georgette attempts to create a scene because she has found a package of women's photographs among his papers. Pomerol allays her suspicions by explaining that the photographs are exhibits in a divorce-suit. After this explanation Georgette goes.

In the FIFTH SCENE Pomerol tells Clotilde the unfortunate episode in Fernande's life, and confides her and Mad. Senechal under Clotilde's care, as he must leave Paris on business for some time.

Clotilde assigns apartments in her house to them; and Madame Senechal is to go under her real name of Madame La Brière, while Fernande is to be called Margaret.

EIGHTH SCENE.—Clotilde receives a telegram from Blois in reply to her inquiry: "The Marquis came to Blois on Wednesday, and returned to Paris the next morning."

In the NINTH SCENE we find Clotilde soliloquizing. It is

clear to her from the Marquis' coldness that he loves another. Just then the Marquis is announced.

Receiving him coldly Clotilde, by cleverly making him believe that she loves him no longer, succeeds in making him confess that his love to her has gradually weakened into friendship, and that he will be unhappy until he can find his unknown beauty from the Montmartre Theatre.

Clotilde conceals her real feelings from the Marquis. They take leave of each other with mutual assurances of eternal friendship and the mutual promise to soon find for each other a good husband and wife. André says in going: "How good you are, Clotilde, the best creature on earth! And if I had not loved you as you deserved, I would learn to now."

In the NEXT SCENE Clotilde wholly abandons herself to her sorrow, and resolves to be revenged. On Therese telling her that the Marquis is returning she thinks that he could not leave her after all and is overjoyed.

André returns and with great exultation tells Clotilde that he has found his unknown beauty in her own house. He is most happy and becomes enthusiastic over the beauty and innocence of his idol.

Clotilde is amazed that it should be the very girl that she has rescued from shame, who has estranged her lover from her, and she immediately conceives her plan of revenge. She tells the Marquis that Margaret and her mother had come from the province some weeks ago in rather straightened circumstances. Her father, a country gentleman, she tells him, had met with a fatal accident while on the chase. They are old acquaintances, and she has asked them to live with her. She sends for Margaret.

In the NEXT SCENE Fernande appears and is introduced as Miss Margaret de la Brière.

Clotilde whispers to her: "Try to please the Marquis. I have my reasons for it." She entertains the Marquis and Fernande at dinner.

ACT III.

Pomerol in travelling attire appears at Clotilde's apartment in search of his wife. He has just returned from a trip, and is surprised to learn that she is here. Georgette, on entering, leaps into his arms.

Georgette tells the unsuspecting Pomerol that André and Margaret are to be married on that day, and finally has another fit of jealousy. Pomerol is about to hurry home to dress for the ceremony when André appears to tell him of his marriage. Pomerol asks after Clotilde.

André exultingly relates how at last after a search of several weeks he has found his love, and how nobly Clotilde assisted him. Pomerol takes leave of André and is about to go, but is called back by Clotilde who has just observed him. He lauds her unselfishness, and she then becomes aware that he does not know who André's bride is.

Pomerol: "No woman would have acted as you did; you deserve to be worshipped."

The FIFTH SCENE brings André and Fernande on the stage. They are now alone for the first time, Clotilde always having contrived to be present.

André asks of Fernande a confession of her love, which she gives him. But she still fears that André, in spite of Clotilde's assurance to her, does not know of that one episode in her life, as he always speaks of her innocence. André takes leave of her with an avowal that he loves her dearly.

In the SIXTH SCENE Fernande is at first alone; she cannot rid herself of the idea that André does not know her secret. Clotilde enters; Fernande says to her: "Oh, Madame, you have deceived me!"

Clotilde: "Deceived?"

Fernande: "When you told me, 'André loves you and asks for your hand,' what did I reply then, never?"

Clotilde attempts to remove her suspicions by saying: "And you are astonished that he keeps his word? Do you not feel this great tenderness that makes him appear ignorant so that you may not blush?"

Still Fernande is resolved to confess everything and writes to him in spite of Clotilde's resistance. "What madness!" Clotilde says. "Do consider! Think of him, of his happiness, and of that of your mother!"

Fernande replies that she will not deceive the man she loves so well. "Though I am not virtuous, I am upright! It is the only honor that is left to me."

Therese bears the letter to the Marquis, and now Clotilde is unhappy for having destroyed her lover's joy as well as her own. She prays that he will pardon her. Just then he appears, ready for the wedding.

Fernande, believing that he has already read the letter, asks him once more if he loves her. He declares that he does.

"And in return for all your kindness and love I have only my heart to give you."

Quite happy she now hastens to dress for the wedding.

In the NEXT SCENE Clotilde succeeds in inducing the Marquis to return to her Fernande's letter before he has read it. "You would spoil the pleasure it will give me to have you read it afterwards." André unsuspectingly returns her the letter.

Therese announces that Fernande is expecting André who leaves after having asked Clotilde to follow soon. She replies that she first wishes to see Pomerol. Clotilde is alone, and watches the happy couple as they enter their carriage to be driven to the banquet hall. She rejoices at the expected success of her diabolical plan. "How much longer my sufferings are to last I do not know; but yours, miserable fellow, shall last forever!"

Pomerol, who appears now to take Clotilde to the wedding, is detained by her until they are too late for the wedding. Finally Clotilde unfolds to Pomerol her plan of revenge. Pomerol, amazed at her wickedness, gains posses-

sion of the letter, and locks her up in a room, as the wedding party is returning. This is the safest way to prevent her from executing her plan. Before the company he excuses her by saying she is suffering from nervousness which made it impossible for her to attend. She is still unwell and can see no one.

Pomerol avoids speaking to Fernande in order not to pain her, and urges André to depart quickly on the wedding trip. As they depart André puts Clotilde in the care of Pomerol.

Pomerol: "Never fear, I shall watch over her!" (When alone). "To-day I could save her, but to-morrow?"

ACT IV.

The salon of the young couple. Mad. de Brionne, the baron, the baroness, the general and an old lady are playing at whist. Fernande serves the tea in her graceful manner, Georgette once again is looking for her husband and is jealous, as she thinks she is on the trail of a secret, although the letter which has aroused her suspicions smells of tobacco and the characters are those of a man.

The conversation is about many things and we learn that Clotilde since the young couple's return has gone on a voyage and that Pomerol is frequently away on secret missions.

In the NEXT SCENE Pomerol appears. Georgette immediately has a tiff with him.

Thereupon Civry appears and relates that he has killed Anatole, a quondam guest of Madame Senechal, in a duel.

Upon his relating how Pomerol saved him from getting into bad company, Fernande becomes faint. Pomerol immediately is master of the situation; he knows there is no danger, as Civry has not seen Fernande when he called at Madame Senechal's.

After Pomerol has promised the servant two thousand francs if he can prevent Clotilde from seeing the Marquis on the day following, he leaves with the rest of the company.

André is alone, as Fernande has retired. Clotilde manages to take advantage of this propitious moment and discloses the secret of Fernande's life to him. The Marquis forbids Clotilde to ever enter his house again, as he is convinced of his wife's innocence; but on Clotilde maintaining the truth of her assertion, he sends for his wife, and her demeanor removes all doubts as to the truth of Clotilde's charge. Fernande, unable to move is, at André's command, led to her room. Suddenly Pomerol appears on the scene. With the proofs—Fernande's letter—in his possession he is enabled to convince André of his wife's purity.

Pomerol: "Real virtue is full of indulgence for sin, full of pity for repentance."

When André speaks of the talk and the silent sneers of the world Pomerol replies: "You will answer these ninnies that it is better to rescue a girl from the downward path than to encourage her to continue on her way, as they are doing. To those wives who do not always pay for their toilets with their husband's money, you will reply that a fallen one who rises again, is worthier of respect than the one who stands but lowers herself."

Finally André says: "Oh, friend, in the future she will no longer be my wife in body, but the wife of my soul!"

While he speaks the last words, Fernande has entered and attempts to leave the room unnoticed. Pomerol keeps her back.

In the last scene Fernande asks Pomerol to let her go as André does not believe in her innocence nor that she had written all to him before their marriage.

It is then that Pomerol takes the letter out of his pocket, reads it to André and explains how they both were victims of Clotilde's revenge.

Fernande once more reads the letter to him kneeling before him, and now André is convinced of the real purity and innocence of his wife.

"Oh, Margaret, my wife, rise! Rise, Madame la Marquise, your place is at my side."

ELEONORA DUSE.

A SHORT time ago "La Duse" was simply the greatest tragedienne of Italy where all people knew her name and fame; and where they would not have thought of comparing another artiste to her. Since then one year has passed—a short time in the struggle for fame and glory, yet in that brief spell Eleonora Duse has excited the enthusiasm of Europe, and is about to ask the judgment of the American people.

Those who know Eleonora Duse mention her youth and beauty. She is now thirty-two years old, but who can say whether she is beautiful or not? On the stage she is beautiful, but she is homely too; she is tall and she is small; she is young and old; awkward and delicate; apathetic and nervous. She is—whatever her part demands. What no artist before her possessed is hers. She has an incomparable power over her nerves and muscles. In sinking her personality in the poet's conception she fascinates, almost hypnotizes us.

Most of our modern actors lack this wonderful adaptability. Their interpretations reflect their individuality. We see through all their own persons and mannerisms. Eleonora Duse in repressing her own self shows the character as created by the author. It seems as though she had appropriated to herself all the subtle phases of human sentiment, and the facility with which she realizes the author's ideas is unrivalled. Thus the poet's conception grows and develops itself before our enraptured eyes. Having become accustomed to see our playwrights adapt their characters to the personalities of our actors, her method of acting is distinctive. The modulations of her voice, her carriage, her manners differ with the occasion. She has not her special days or scenes, her humors or caprices. Every time she acts the same part in the same way, not on account of any mechanical retentiveness of memory, but because she grows every time into the part that is to be represented.

But it is hard, almost impossible, to suggest an idea of this wonderful woman, who seems to have surmounted the boundaries that separate nature from art.

Who is Eleonora Duse?

She was born at Vigevano, a small town between Piedmont and Lombardy. Her talent is hereditary, her father and grandfather having been actors of no mean ability.

The grandfather, Luigi Duse, was thoroughly legitimate in his work. He recited in Venetian dialect, a new line in those days and afterwards taken up by Morolin at Veceni and at Milan by Ferravilla.

This Duse established the Garibaldi Theatre at Padua. "Sor Duse" was his popular Venetian name. The life of Eleonora Duse, the granddaughter, has been one of bitter struggles against poverty and the obstacles of unfavorable environment.

Habit was her first school; habit the initiation of her artistic life. Perhaps never in the days of her childhood did Eleonora Duse say, "I want to be an actress." Perhaps no symptom of that irresistible desire which is the usual beginning of every triumphant career, foretold to her—not even in the hours of her most fantastic and audacious childish projects—the glory that to-day reflects upon her sorrowful childhood.

She was scarcely twelve years old when she was working almost day and night upon the stage in obscure theatres, those sad and grotesque asylums of inferior companies. Her wages represented the most important item in the income of her not well-to-do family. Those were days of toil and suffering, when, weak from lack of sufficient food, she had to undergo the exhausting fatigues of the stage, and her chief reward was the applause of an audience richer in emotions than in gold and silver. Often while suffering the pangs of hunger, the young girl, strengthened by her ambition and love of family, hid her personal pains in the character of the sweetheart of *Paolo* to be killed by *Lancelot*, whilst declaiming the sweet, guilty love of *Francesca da Rimini*.

Nor was she compensated by being feted as an infant wonder. Indeed, she was almost compelled to conceal her youth from both manager and public, lest it might produce a doubt in their minds that the repertoire of dramas and tragedies were entirely unsuited to her tender years. The pressing need of money weighed not only on her genius but on her mind and spirits which, notwithstanding the sufferings of a life of toil, were naturally gay, certainly not due to the wearing, exhaustive work of the tragedienne, but to open-air exercise and the mirth and mischief of a noisy company. Still she developed force of spirit. She combined the manner of the adult woman with that of the thoughtful child. Almost unknown to herself she became absorbed in her part, and

the woman inoculated the child with strong emotions which deprived her gestures, her face, her voice of all childishness, and touched her audiences and caused her companions to wonder. Thus the germs of a great actress grew in the little wandering comedienne.

When representing *Francesca da Rimini* or *Caverina* in *Angelo, tyrant of Padua*, she divined rather than comprehended the sentiment of the dramatic poetry of Silvio Pellico and Victor Hugo, and she aroused the wildest enthusiasm which, even though emanating from audiences of little culture, marked not simply the girl prodigy, but a phenomenal promise of future greatness.

After Silvio Pellico and Victor Hugo she turned her attention to Shakespeare, whom she soon understood perfectly. She had scarcely completed her sixteenth year when she acted the tragedy of the sublime poem *Romeo and Juliet* with infinite sweetness of passion.

Eleonora Duse had not then ceased to be the leading lady in wandering companies. The representation of the Shakesperian tragedy took place in an open theatre, the Arena of Verona, in the very city where the story of the two lovers, faithful unto death, is popular tradition; in that very city where the garrulous citizens of the lower class point with pride to the tomb containing the dust of the love-sick *Juliet*.

The theatre was crowded with a good-natured audience, less concerned with Shakespeare than with the dear legend. The legend seemed reality. The actress did not declaim or recite the part of *Juliet*, but was *Juliet* herself—the true, the only *Juliet*—come back to life. The Arena of Verona resounded with frantic applause; the actress was called and recalled. Her triumph was complete.

But the triumph of Verona did not suffice to make her famous in Italy nor to obtain for her an engagement with a leading dramatic company. Her artistic life was still one of painful and struggling vagabondage. At this time Eleonora Duse, as yet but little known in Italy, made a tour of Dalmatia, but always as before, in the minor theatres. Even in this strange land she was successful. On the picturesque shores of the Adriatic she found and enjoyed all the beauties of nature, but alas! the turning-point in her career had not yet arrived.

And by a strange contradiction of fate she, the dreamer of Venice, of that silent, mysterious, melancholy city of Italy, was first comprehended and acknowledged as a great actress in the gayest, liveliest, most beautiful of Italian cities—Naples.

It seemed as though in this metropolis where the theatre has most ancient and honorable traditions, Eleonora Duse was to find an intelligent appreciation of her genius. At Naples she found a respectable stage and company and a discerning public. At Naples she trod the same boards—those of the old Florentine Theatre—upon which had shone Adam Alberti, Salvini, Bellotti-Bon, Madame Cazzola, Ristori, and the greatest personalities of the Italian stage. At Naples she felt herself to be justly and intrinsically valued. At Naples she became conscious of her own capabilities.

The great characteristic of Eleonora Duse, and one which raises her above all her contemporaries is the manner in which she eliminates all artifice, method and everything indeed that partakes of the artificial, in her life upon the stage. Even at the cost of displeasing the majority of a mixed crowd of spectators and forfeiting applause, she will not aid her portrayals by resorting to those sham elaborations by which actors think they may transform themselves into the persons, whom, for a few hours, they represent. Truth is her goal; it is also her path. With her it is ever present. She thoroughly conquers truth without catering to the public caprice or her own womanly vanity or the world of illusion belonging to stage life. She sees the truth; she feels it. Yet it is subjective truth. And of sorrow, the grand motive of feminine action upon the stage, she is the truest exponent.

She has resuscitated Dumas's *La Femme de Claude*, and has caused it to be applauded by the public that had formerly condemned it.

It is easily understood how and why the revelations of this art have revolutionized the theatrical world of Europe, first exciting the curiosity of her various audiences, and gradually provoking them to enthusiasm. Under the management of Commendator Cesare Rossi she gave at Venice a most vivid demonstration of her power, interpreting the part of that very original type of combined honesty and ferocity, the *Princess of Bagdad*. And very soon the most difficult and audacious French repertoires had in her an interpreter both subtle and powerful—an interpreter who at the same time knew how to purify them of all the effects indispensable to success in Paris.

She renewed in an exquisite manner *Marguerite Gautier*, that always fascinating heroine of Dumas. She put new life into and humanized *Clotilde* in the drama *Fernande*, in which the vin

dictive hatred of an enamored woman has the persistence, the patience, the deliberation which scorn impossibilities.

Continuing this kind of corrective and molding work she succeeded even in elevating characters which had hitherto been failures in the countries of their respective authors, and she obtained enthusiastic applause in Europe for that audacious incarnation of feminine atrocities; the *Femme de Claude*, of Dumas, and compelled appreciation of the worth of that highly philosophical but little theatrical *L'Abbesse de Jouarre*, of Renan.

She passed from nervousness to the solemnity of philosophy, arbitrarily applied to the theatre, and from philosophy to the merry coquetry of Parisian comedy—aristocratic as in *Francillon* risqué as in *Divorçons*. From Parisian comedy she passed to the purely Italian art of Carlo Goldoni, who in the delicious simplicity of her acting found a new type of youth, of happy and smiling beauty.

Whilst she applied herself with such profitable activity to the modern theatre she gave at the same time her scrupulous attention to Shakespeare. She felt more deeply than ever the infinite love of *Juliet*; immersed herself in the suave, fluctuating madness of *Ophelia*; brought upon the stage the beautiful and fatal *Cleopatra*.

After having seen Eleonora Duse in Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, it may be possible to get an idea of the great range of this actress' genius. Her *Cleopatra* is the most perfect incarnation of that famous historical woman—that superb creation of Shakespeare's genius. One feels one's self under a spell, seeing the beautiful Egyptian with her bronzed face, glancing in violent, almost brutish passion upon *Anthony*, in whose embrace she is lingering.

And it is notable how, interpreting the tragic repertoire, she succeeded in substituting her simple and grave recitation for the stilted language of the classic drama. The abolition of declamatory speech in tragedy is one of the greatest results of this reforming work of Eleonora Duse.

And during this immense work of reform, public and critics alike united in applauding and praising. And she, thrusting aside the unsuitable, keeping the valuable, reading, studying, selecting, has never consented to interpret a part in which she did not find herself capable of that psychological elaboration—that assimilation which is the secret of her art.

Eleonora Duse, the unerring portrayer of the truth,

has never renounced and never will renounce upon the stage that perfect charm which Alexandre Dumas in one of his brilliant prefaces pronounces as being, in a theatre, more necessary than truth.

But there is the difference: Dumas wants charm at any rate, on any condition; Duse on the contrary wants and obtains charm through the medium of truth.

Alexandre Dumas and Duse are personally unknown to each other, yet they may well be called good friends. The unexpected success of *La Femme de Claude* united them in an agreeable exchange of correspondence. And later Dumas, grateful to her for the artistic renewal of this particular play, created for her a *Denise*, whose tormented and noble innocence harassed, but not soiled by crime, counterbalanced in the artistic budget of Dumas and in that of Duse the depravities of the *Femme de Claude*.

In a new edition of his *Théâtre Complet* just issued in Paris Dumas says: "There is in this new edition of *Princess of Bagdad* an amendment in the last scene. Neither I nor the French actress who created this part in Paris suggested it, although it is now, as we see, irrefutable and irresistible. It was Eleonora Duse, the admirable Italian tragedienne, now exciting the enthusiasm of Vienna, who had this inspiration when she played the part in Rome. I have changed it definitely and for ever, but the honor and the merit are hers. I wish to thank her, and I feel called upon to do so publicly for introducing two of my plays, never played before her, into the Italian theatre. It is to be regretted for our French dramatic art that this unsurpassed artiste is not French."

There is nothing further to say. In the noble lineaments of her pallid face there is sometimes the expression of weariness, sometimes the fierceness of hate, the tenderness of affection, the spasm of anguish, the joy of triumph, mirrored with that versatility and admirable precision belonging to great artistes.

No one can make such sudden and quick changes of expression as Eleonora Duse, or with simpler means. A hasty, unexpected turn of the eyes, a movement of the head, a curl of the lips that, with a sarcastic smile concealing her tears, give expressions continually different and continually new to her face, except when a sudden blush—a blush natural and true caused by the agitation of passion—diffuses it with color and modifies and transforms it exactly as the action demands.

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